

DTB-HK-AD5471

JAMES H. HARRIS
KENNEDY
HOWE A-120

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE 130734Z OCT 72 VIA CAS CHANNELS (BUKKER)
FROM: AMBASSADOR BUNKER SAIGON 0184
TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY FOR HENRY A. KISSINGER
REFS: A) WHS 2212; B) WHS 2213

1. I INFORMED THIEU TODAY OF SUBSTANCE OF REFERENCED MESSAGES COVERING MEETINGS OF OCTOBER 3 AND 9 AND THAT INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE OTHER SIDE WILL FOCUS ON THE MILITARY ISSUES AT TODAY'S MEETING. I EMPHASIZED THE NECESSITY OF MOVING PROMPTLY TO SEIZE THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF CRITICAL TERRITORY AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY OF THE OTHER SIDE SURFACING A CEASE-FIRE PROPOSAL. THIEU AGAIN CONFIRMED TO ME THE FACT THAT HE HAD GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS ALONG THESE LINES TO ALL CORPS COMMANDERS AT HIS MEETING WITH THEM ON OCTOBER 6. I SAID THAT GENERAL MEYARD BELIEVED THE COMMANDERS IN MR'S 1, 2, AND 4 ARE MOVING AHEAD SATISFACTORILY, BUT THAT GENERAL MINH'S FORCES IN MR 3 ARE NOT AGGRESSIVELY ATTACKING THE ENEMY AND DIGGING THEM OUT OF HAMLETS THEY NOW OCCUPY.

2. THIEU THEN SPECULATED ON THE POSSIBILITY OF THE OTHER SIDE OFFERING A CEASE-FIRE AND THEIR MOTIVES IN DOING SO. THEY WILL WANT TO PURSUE A POLITICAL SOLUTION, HE THINKS, AS LONG AS THEY BELIEVE THEY ARE WINNING AND GAINING TERRITORY. IF THE SITUATION TURNS AGAINST THEM, HOWEVER, AND THEIR MILITARY POTENTIAL DECLINES WITH A LOSS OF TERRITORY AND SUPPLIES THEY MAY THEN BELIEVE IT IN THEIR INTEREST TO COME FORWARD WITH A PROPOSAL FOR A CEASE-FIRE WHILE THEY CONTINUE TO TALK, INCREASING PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE ON US WHILE GAINING A RESPIRE FOR THEMSELVES. THIEU SAID THAT IN PRECEDING YEARS THE ENEMY HAD FOUGHT A SEASONAL WAR, WITHDRAWING WHEN THE WEATHER TURNED AGAINST HIM. THIS YEAR HE BELIEVES THE ENEMY WILL NOT WITHDRAW UNLESS FORCED TO DO SO BY THE DESTRUCTION OF HIS PERSONNEL AND SUPPLIES. HE WILL TRY TO FIX ARVN TROOPS WHILE HE ENDEAVORS TO MAINTAIN PRESSURE ON THE COUNTRYSIDE; THEN IF A CEASE-FIRE IS ARRANGED, HE WILL HAVE FORCES WITHIN THE COUNTRY AND CLAIM THAT THEY BELONG TO THE NLF, THUS COMPLICATING THE PROBLEM OF REGROUPMENT. THIS, HE SAID, IS CONFIRMED BY CAPTURED DOCUMENTS GIVING THE CADRE INSTRUCTIONS TO PREPARE FOR A SOLUTION OF THE WAR. THESE INDICATE THAT A COALITION GOVERNMENT WILL BE FORMED AT THE TOP, BUT NOT AT THE LOWER ECHELONS WHERE THE COMMUNISTS WILL SET UP A FULL ADMINISTRATIVE APPARATUS IN HAMLETS AND VILLAGES THEY CONTROL. THEN AFTER A CEASE-FIRE THE LAST OFFENSIVE TO TAKE OVER THE COUNTRY WILL BE LAUNCHED.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

3. WARM REGARDS.

DOS Review
Completed.

OXNQU